

REMARKS

Reconsideration and the timely allowance of the pending claims, in view of the following remarks, are respectfully requested.

In the Final Office Action dated April 12, 2006, the Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 9-13, and 17-18, under 35 USC §103(a), as allegedly being unpatentable over EP '222 (E.P. 1 286 222) in view of EP '088 (E.P. 2003088088).

The Examiner objected to claims 6-8 and 14-16 but otherwise indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

By this Amendment, Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 9, and 17 to provide a clearer presentation of the claimed subject matter and have cancelled claims 8 and 16, without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants submit that no new matter has been introduced. By virtue of the cancellation of claims 8 and 16, the objections of these claims have been rendered

Applicants disagree with the Examiner's rejections. However, in an effort to expedite the examination of the present application, Applicants submit that the changes to independent claims 1 and 9, as amended, substantially incorporate the subject matter of claims 8 and 16, respectively, thereby effectively re-writing claims 8 and 16 in independent form. Independent method claim 17, has also been amended to include such features. As such, independent claims 1, 9, and 17 are, as acknowledged by the Examiner, allowable. And, because claims 2-7, claims 8-15, and claim 18 depend, either directly or indirectly from claims 1, 9, and 17, respectively, claims 2-7, claims 8-15, and claim 18 are allowable at least by virtue of dependency as well as for their additional recitations.

All matters having been addressed and in view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully requests the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration of this application, and the immediate allowance of all pending claims.

Applicants submit that this response is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 as: (a) the claim changes deal with former dependent limitations that *should have already been searched* and have been indicated as being allowable; (b) the application is in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; and (c) the application is in better form for an Appeal, should an Appeal be necessary.

Applicant's Counsel remains ready to assist the Examiner in any way to facilitate and expedite the prosecution of this matter. If any point remains in issue in which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, please contact the Undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number **033975**. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

**PILLSBURY WINTHROP
SHAW PITTMAN LLP**



E. R. HERNANDEZ
Reg. No. 47641
Tel. No. 703 770.7788
Fax No. 703 770.7901

Date: July 5, 2006
P.O. Box 10500
McLean, VA 22102
(703) 905-2000